

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- 5 1. A method for managing a network infrastructure comprising:
 storing an expected network infrastructure description;
 comparing said expected network infrastructure description with a
current network infrastructure description; and
 outputting a result of said comparing step, wherein differences
10 between said expected network infrastructure description and said current
network infrastructure description are displayed.
2. The method for managing a network infrastructure as recited in
Claim 1, wherein said network infrastructure is a switched network
15 infrastructure.
3. The method for managing a network infrastructure as recited in
Claim 1, wherein said method further comprises changing said network
infrastructure with a configuration agent and storing said change in said
20 expected network infrastructure description.
4. The method for managing a network infrastructure as recited in
Claim 1, wherein said comparing further comprises collecting said current
network infrastructure description.
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5. The method for managing a network infrastructure as recited in
Claim 4, wherein said collecting of said current network infrastructure
description further comprises using agents to collect said current network
infrastructure description.

6. The method for managing a network infrastructure as recited in Claim 1, wherein said comparing further comprises converting said expected network infrastructure description into an expected network infrastructure graphical description and converting said current network infrastructure description into a current network infrastructure graphical description.

7. The method for managing a network infrastructure as recited in Claim 6, wherein said comparing further comprises comparing said expected network infrastructure graphical description with said current network infrastructure graphical description.

8. The method for managing a network infrastructure as recited in Claim 1, wherein said outputting further comprises:

outputting a list of devices from said expected network infrastructure description which are missing from said current network infrastructure description;

outputting a list of devices from said current network infrastructure description having a different configuration from the configuration of said devices in said expected network infrastructure description; and

outputting a list of devices from said current network infrastructure description which are not described in said expected network infrastructure description.

9. The method for managing a network infrastructure as recited in Claim 1, wherein said outputting further comprises:

outputting a message stating that said expected network infrastructure description and said current network infrastructure description are identical.

10. A computer system comprising:
a bus;
a memory unit coupled to said bus; and
5 a processor coupled to said bus, said processor for executing a
method for managing a network infrastructure comprising:
storing an expected network infrastructure description;
comparing said expected network infrastructure description with a
current network infrastructure description; and
10 outputting a result of said comparing step, wherein differences
between said expected network infrastructure description and said current
network infrastructure description are displayed.

11. The computer system as recited in Claim 10, wherein said network
15 infrastructure is a switched network infrastructure.

12. The computer system as recited in Claim 10, wherein said method
further comprises changing said network infrastructure with a configuration
agent and storing said change in said expected network infrastructure
20 description.

13. The computer system as recited in Claim 10, wherein said
comparing further comprises collecting said current network infrastructure
description.
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14. The computer system as recited in Claim 13, wherein said
collecting of said current network infrastructure description further comprises
using agents to collect said current network infrastructure description.

15. The computer system as recited in Claim 10, wherein said
comparing further comprises converting said expected network infrastructure
description into an expected network infrastructure graphical description and
5 converting said current network infrastructure description into a current network
infrastructure graphical description.

16. The computer system as recited in Claim 15, wherein said
comparing further comprises comparing said expected network infrastructure
10 graphical description with said current network infrastructure graphical
description.

17. The computer system as recited in Claim 10, wherein said
outputting further comprises:
15 outputting a list of devices from said expected network
infrastructure description which are missing from said current network
infrastructure description;
outputting a list of devices from said current network infrastructure
description having a different configuration from the configuration of said
20 devices in said expected network infrastructure description; and
outputting a list of devices from said current network infrastructure
description which are not described in said expected network infrastructure
description.

25 18. The computer system as recited in Claim 10, wherein said
outputting further comprises:
outputting a message stating that said expected network
infrastructure description and said current network infrastructure description are
identical.

19. A computer-usable medium having computer-readable program code embodied therein for causing a computer system to perform a method for managing a network infrastructure comprising:

- 5 storing an expected network infrastructure description;
comparing said expected network infrastructure description with a current network infrastructure description; and
outputting a result of said comparing step, wherein differences between said expected network infrastructure description and said current
10 network infrastructure description are displayed.

20. The computer-usable medium as recited in Claim 19, wherein said network infrastructure is a switched network infrastructure.

- 15 21. The computer-usable medium as recited in Claim 19, wherein said method further comprises changing said network infrastructure with a configuration agent and storing said change in said expected network infrastructure description.

- 20 22. The computer-usable medium as recited in Claim 19, wherein said comparing further comprises collecting said current network infrastructure description.

- 25 23. The computer-usable medium as recited in Claim 22, wherein said collecting of said current network infrastructure description further comprises using agents to collect said current network infrastructure description.

24. The computer-usable medium as recited in Claim 19, wherein
said comparing further comprises converting said expected network
infrastructure description into an expected network infrastructure graphical
description and converting said current network infrastructure description into a
5 current network infrastructure graphical description.

25. The computer-usable medium as recited in Claim 24, wherein
said comparing further comprises comparing said expected network
infrastructure graphical description with said current network infrastructure
10 graphical description.

26. The computer-usable medium as recited in Claim 19, wherein
said outputting further comprises:
outputting a list of devices from said expected network
15 infrastructure description which are missing from said current network
infrastructure description;
outputting a list of devices from said current network infrastructure
description having a different configuration from the configuration of said
devices in said expected network infrastructure description; and
20 outputting a list of devices from said current network infrastructure
description which are not described in said expected network infrastructure
description.

27. The computer-usable medium as recited in Claim 19, wherein
25 said outputting further comprises:
outputting a message stating that said expected network
infrastructure description and said current network infrastructure description are
identical.